

North Carolina Air National Guard

TGIF News

Volume 2004, Issue 7, April 1, 2004

(The Guard is Family)



National Volunteer Appreciation Week April 18 Through 24

The theme for this year's celebration is "Volunteers Inspire By Example", and it will set the stage for national, regional and local organizations to applaud the efforts of men, women, and young people while encouraging others to help solve serious problems through volunteerism.

This year's observance marks the 30th anniversary of National Volunteer Appreciation Week, which began in 1974 when President Richard Nixon signed an executive order establishing the week as an annual celebration of volunteering.

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What an excellent opportunity during National Volunteer Appreciation Week to acknowledge the contributions as well as salute our unsung heroes, our Family Readiness Volunteers. The unit commander's work is never done, there's military members to brief, forms to be filled out, families to help, as well as mobilizations to plan. Even the best Family Readiness commanders find themselves looking for that 25th hour in the day. Thank goodness for volunteers. In our Family Readiness Program volunteering is not just nice, it's necessary. Our volunteers devote numerous hours checking in on deployed members families, sending notes to let families know they are special, getting air conditioners fixed, helping make Christmas special for children of our deployed members, and being there during deployments and reunions with their support. It makes a real difference for commanders, who, with their volunteer's help, can focus on their most important job - Readiness. Our Family Readiness Volunteers make a gift of their time for reasons other than money.

"VOLUNTEERS.....THE HEART OF OUR FAMILY READINESS PROGRAM"

This month of April, in honor of Volunteer Appreciation Week, we would like to say thank you to all of our Family Readiness Volunteers. The success of the North Carolina Family Readiness Program comes from the hearts of our dedicated volunteers. Having a good friend makes all the difference in the life of a military family.

OEF/OIF VA Benefits site for returning veterans.

This site may be of value as many of our mobilized members are now returning veterans and may need assistance or guidance on their benefits and entitlements.

<http://www.vba.va.gov/efif/index.htm>

Welcome to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) web site for returning Active Duty, National Guard and Reserve service members of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. We honor the opportunity to provide benefits information and assistance to eligible veterans who honorably fought and served in our Nation's armed forces.

FINANCIAL AID FOR MILITARY PERSONNEL & DEPENDENTS

March 2004 – DANTES Code 10J

BOOKLETS

Need a Lift? * - College Financial Aid Handbook

COST

\$3.95

TO OBTAIN, CONTACT:

American Legion National Emblem Sales
P. O. Box 1050
Indianapolis, IN 46206
1-888-453-4466 (toll-free)

Contains Section called **Educational
Benefits for Veterans & Dependents**

Student Guide to Federal Financial Aid**

Free

Federal Student Aid Information Center
P. O. Box 84
Washington, DC 20044-0084

Free on-line at:

http://studentaid.ed.gov/students/publications/student_guide/index.html

1-800-433-3243 (toll free)

Managing the Price of College

Free

Education Publications Center
P.O. Box 1398
Jessup, MD 20794-1398

Free on-line at:

<http://www.ed.gov/pubs/collegecosts/cover.html>

Troops to Teachers Trifold*** <http://www.proudtoserveagain.com>

DANTES 1-800-231-6242

* Education ctrs order free from DANTES, Stock # 2402 – **Limit: 200 per year**

** Education ctrs order free from DANTES, Stock # 2405 – **Limit: 500 per year**

*** Education ctrs order free from DANTES, Stock # 0002 – **Limit: 1000 per quarter**

ADDITIONAL ONLINE RESOURCES

DANTES Web site: Student Financial Aid Info:

http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/refpubs/finaid.htm

VA Education Web site: <http://www.gibill.va.gov>

Federal employees and family members scholarships:

<http://www.feea.org/scholarships.shtml>

FINANCIAL AID FOR SPOUSES AND/OR CHILDREN

SPONSOR

Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society Education Programs
(Scholarships, Loans, Spouse TA, etc.)

Web site: <http://www.nmcrcs.org/education.html>

Army Emergency Relief Spouse Ed. Assistance Program
http://www.aerhq.org/education_spouseeducation_assistance.asp

Air Force Aid Society Education Grant

Fleet Reserve Association (FRA)
(Members can be active duty, Reserve, or retired personnel of Navy, Marine Corps or Coast Guard). Web site: <http://www.fra.org>
Click on "FAQ's," scroll down to "FRA Scholarships"

The Retired Officers Association (TROA)
Web site: <http://www.troa.org/education/default.asp>
TROA is now Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)

Defense Commissary Agency/Fisherhouse Foundation

Federal Children's Scholarship Fund

General Motors & Navy AutoSource
(For H.S. Seniors -children of active duty Navy/Marine Corps)

Coast Guard Mutual Assistance

CONTACT

NMCRS Education Division
4015 Wilson Blvd., 10th Floor
Arlington, VA 22203-1978
703-696-4904

AER National Headquarters
Spouse Education Program
200 Stoval Street
Alexandria, VA 22332-0600

http://afas.org/body_grant.htm

FRA Scholarship Program
125 N. West Street
Alexandria, VA 22314-2754
1-800-FRA-1924 (toll-free)

MOAA Educational Aid
201 N. Washington Street
Alexandria, VA 22314-2529
1-800-234-6622

Scholarships for Military Child
1-888-294-8560
<http://www.militaryscholar.org>

For children of Federal employees &
military members
<http://www.fedscholarships.org>

Citizen of the Year Scholarship Program
Gina De Hann – 516-921-2800 Ext 1703

1-800-881-2462.
<http://www.cgmahq.org>

Be Legally Prepared Before You're Mobilized

By 1st Lt Scarlet Wooton, NCARNG

ARLINGTON, Va. - Military readiness is often thought of in terms of training, finances, and equipment. In the wake of the largest mobilization of the National Guard since the Korean War, legal readiness is vital. The rush to complete routine legal paperwork on short notice can cause unnecessary anxiety for soldiers and their family members and undue pressures on the legal staff. Planning on the part of the soldiers and commanders can help ensure legal readiness before troops are mobilized.

The Value of a Will: There is no civilian or military legal requirement to have a will, but failure to have one upon death will normally result in unnecessary burdens and grief to the surviving family members. A will names the person, who has the authority to act on the deceased's behalf. It specifically declares how assets will be distributed, appoints guardians of children and establishes trusts for minor or adult children. A will also provides for many other aspects ranging from personal gifts to charities, to what action to take to meet the deceased's legal and financial obligations. State laws will generally control distribution if you do not have a will. However, if some distribution is desired, then a will is advisable. The best course of action is to have a will, even if you are a single soldier. Often during times of actual deployment, there is not enough time to prepare a will for every soldier requesting one. Priorities may be established based on "legal need". It is much easier to complete wills for soldiers during a home station drill than it is in the midst of a deployment.

Differing Powers of Attorney: Powers of attorney range from general which covers a vast majority of property matters, to special which accomplishes a particular task. When giving power of attorney, you are appointing an agent with the same authority as yourself, to act in your behalf. It is important that the person appointed is totally trustworthy and understands your wishes, because that person's signature can bind you to a contract or other obligation. Once a power of attorney is given, it is very difficult to void unless it can be retrieved from the agent or destroyed. For that reason, most general powers of attorney will have specific termination dates.

A general power of attorney permits your appointed agent to act on your behalf concerning a broad range of property matters ranging from buying to selling. Your agent basically "steps into your shoes" legally and financially.

A special power of attorney allows your agent to act on your behalf regarding specific matters, such as preparing your taxes or managing a specific piece of real estate. The specific power is described in exact terms.

Medical or health care power of attorney permit the agent to make the daily decisions concerning which doctor, hospital, access to medical records, authorization for surgery and obligation of debts if the principal is temporarily or permanently incapacitated or incompetent. If the principal regains capacity, the authority is suspended.

Living wills, also known as advanced medical directives, deal with a narrow area

when the patient is terminal, the condition is irreversible and stabilized, the patient is unable to make decisions because he/she is normally comatose or in a vegetative state, and the physicians have concluded that the most they can do from this point forward is simply prolong the dying process without any expectation of recovery. The physicians then seek authority to terminate further medical care and life support. The living will permits individuals even before they become patients to declare their desires and to appoint agents to act for them in terminating life support should they sustain this condition.

SGLI Coverage: A \$250,000 Service member's Group Life Insurance (SGLI) policy is normally one of the largest dollar assets in a soldier's estate, so it must be treated seriously. Periodically review who is named as the primary and an alternate beneficiary of the policy, and change those beneficiaries as your circumstances change. Single soldiers will often name a family member or current boyfriend/girlfriend as the beneficiary, and then marry without changing the beneficiary to the spouse and children. This failure to update beneficiaries could be a potential disaster to surviving family members, because the SGLI benefit will be paid to those named in the policy, regardless of what may be stated in the last will and testament. Another common error is to use "By Law" to indicate the beneficiaries. To ensure the correct beneficiaries receive the money, always list the names and specific relationships of the beneficiaries and the percentage to be paid to each person. For payment directly into a trust established by a will, the beneficiary should state, "Payable to the trustee established in my last will and testament for the benefit of my son/daughter, John/Jame Doe". By doing so, the funds will go into the trust without court appointment of a custodian of the funds, as would be needed if payment was directly named to a minor.

SSCRA: The soldiers and Sailors Civil Relief Act of 1940 (SSCRA) is a federal law designed to protect soldiers (and in many circumstances their dependents) from some legal obligations when military service interferes with them. The act can also allow soldiers to postpone certain civil (not criminal) actions during their absence, reduce interest rates to 6 percent on their pre-service loans, have protection against foreclosures and repossessions without a court order and request prospective relief of the court for certain financial obligations they can't meet because of military service. The SSCRA is a highly technical law, and there are a number of obstacles to overcome to use its protections. Therefore getting advice from a Judge Advocate General attorney as to your specific circumstances is the best approach.

USERRA: The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) affords soldiers certain protections to their civilian job. USERRA entitlements to your former job depend on the period of service and are very case specific. The best course of action for individual soldiers is to make your commander aware of any potential issues you have with your employer.

Solving situations early is key: The National Committee for Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve was created to inform employers of the ever-increasing importance of the National Guard and Reserve and to explain the necessity for - and role of - these forces in national defense. The ESGR Committee offers a wide variety of information and assistance programs designed to capture the attention of employers and win their support. Each state ESGR committee has onbudsman, who are knowledgeable on USERRA. Commanders can go to their unit JAG officer, who can refer them to an onbudsman in their area. For more information concerning ESGR, go to www.esgr.com or call the national ESGR hotline at 1-800-336-4590.

Troops Get Federal Tax Break For Combat Zone Service

By Gerry J. Gilmore American Forces Press Service WASHINGTON, March 11, 2004

American troops serving in designated combat zones in support of the war against terrorism continue to get a tax break from Uncle Sam. Depending upon rank, eligible service members can exclude from federal income tax either all or some of their active duty pay - and certain other pays - earned in any month during service in a designated combat zone.

The Internal Revenue Service's Armed Forces' Tax Guide for 2003 says "a combat zone is any area the president of the United States designates by executive order as an area in which the U.S. armed forces are engaging or have engaged in combat." Service members who serve one or more days in a designated combat zone are entitled to federal tax exclusion benefits for that entire month, according to the IRS. Current designated combat zones include, Afghanistan, Iraq and other specified parts of the Persian Gulf region — to include Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates - and parts of the Kosovo area. Service members in several other areas specified in law as "qualified hazardous duty areas" are eligible for the same tax breaks. Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Croatia have been listed since 1995.

The downloadable Armed Forces' Tax Guide for 2003 can be accessed on the IRS Web site. It lists many, but not all, designated combat zones. Some service members providing direct support for military operations within a designated combat zone or qualified hazardous duty area, such as Djibouti, Africa, Turkey, Yemen, and the Philippines, are eligible for income tax exclusions. To be in direct support of a combat zone, a service member must be serving in an area the secretary of defense determines is directly supporting a combat zone. Service members deployed to Mediterranean waters east of 30 degrees east longitude also are eligible for combat zone tax relief, from March 19 to Aug. 1, 2003, as an "in direct support" area. Service members serving in Israel from Jan. 1 to Aug. 1, 2003, also were serving in an "in direct support" area.

While military members can use the tax guide in preparing their 2003 federal tax returns, those who have specific questions about designated combat zones should contact their unit personnel or pay officials or unit tax assistance officer. The IRS guide notes service members normally don't need to claim the combat zone exclusion or subtract eligible earnings on their federal tax returns. The services normally have already excluded combat zone earnings from the taxable gross income reported on service members' Form W-2s, the guide says. The IRS points out that military retired pay and pensions aren't eligible as combat zone income tax exclusions.

In other military pay news, The National Defense Authorization Act for 2004 extended the increase in imminent danger pay to \$225 per month to eligible service members through Dec. 31, 2004. The amount of service member federal tax relief depends upon a taxpayer's rank. For example, enlisted troops and warrant officers serving in a designated combat zone or qualified hazardous duty area for any part of a month exclude all gross income earned for military service that month from federal

taxation. For commissioned officers, the monthly income exclusion is capped at the highest enlisted member pay (E-9), plus any hostile fire or imminent danger pay received. For example, in 2003, the most a commissioned officer could earn tax-free each month was \$5,957.70. For 2004, the cap increases to \$6,315.90 (\$6,090.90, the highest monthly enlisted pay, plus \$225 hostile fire or imminent danger pay.) The IRS also allows troops deployed to an area entitled to combat zone tax exclusion extra time to file their federal taxes, usually 180 days after the service member leaves the combat zone or qualified hazardous duty area. And, the Military Family Tax Relief Act of 2003 provides certain above-the-line tax deductions for reservists and National Guard members who travel more than 100 miles to attend military drills and meetings. This new provision allows reservists and Guard members who cannot itemize deductions to still take these deductions. This provision is effective for the 2003 tax year. The act also provides a \$12,000 nontaxable death gratuity to families of service members who die on active duty, retroactive to Sept. 10, 2001.

Stateside “Space A” Travel Test Extended

By Tech. Sgt. Mark Diamond, AMC Public Affairs

SCOTT AIR FORCE BASE, ILL. (AMCNS) - The one-year test to expand space-available travel privileges to family members of active-duty and retired personnel traveling within the Continental United States was extended, according to a Feb. 24 message released by Air Mobility Command's Air Transportation Division. In the message, Lt. Col. Darcy Lilley, Chief of the Air Transportation Division's Passenger Policy Branch, said the extension will allow the test to continue while the Office of the Secretary of Defense completes its evaluation of the test.

Under the “Space-A” test phase, the family members of active-duty and retired military people are able to travel “Space-A” aboard military flights when accompanied by their sponsors, according to John Lundeby, AMC Passenger Policy Branch. He said the test does not apply to “gray-area retirees” - Guard and Reserve members who are retired, but are not yet eligible for retired pay and benefits. Lundeby explained that in December 2000, the commander of U.S. Transportation Command outlined the proposed test as a way to improve quality-of-life privileges for military service people and their families. After reviewing the proposal, Defense officials approved the one-year test period.

“Prior to the test, regulations prohibited family members from flying space available within the CONUS,” said Lundeby. “This privilege was available only to active-duty and retired military people. During the test period, dependents can accompany them.” To register for space-available travel, active-duty sponsors must be on leave or a pass and remain in the status while awaiting travel and through the entire travel period.

Additional Space-A travel and signup information is available through the Headquarters AMC Passenger Policy Branch Web site at <http://public.amc.af.mil/SPACEA/spacea.htm>. A list of passenger terminals and phone numbers can be found there.

Following added by 172 APF: Local space A number is (601)405-8761. Personnel are available to assist you each technician work day in the Aerial Port.

TRICARE
Important
Telephone Numbers

TRICARE FOR LIFE
1-888-363-5433

PHARMACY
1-877-363-6337

**NATIONAL MAIL
ORDER PHARMACY**
1-866-363-8667

**TRICARE
PRIME REMOTE**
1-888-363-2273

TRICARE DENTAL
1-888-622-2256 (Enrollment)
1-800-866-8499 (Information)

**REGION 1
NORTH EAST**
1-888-999-5195

**REGION 2
MID - ATLANTIC**
1-800-931-9501

**REGION 3
SOUTHEAST**
1-800-444-5445

**REGION 4
GULF SOUTH**
1-800-444-5445

**REGION 5
HEARTLAND**
1-800-941-4501

**REGION 6
SOUTHWEST**
1-800-406-2832

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1-888-874-9378

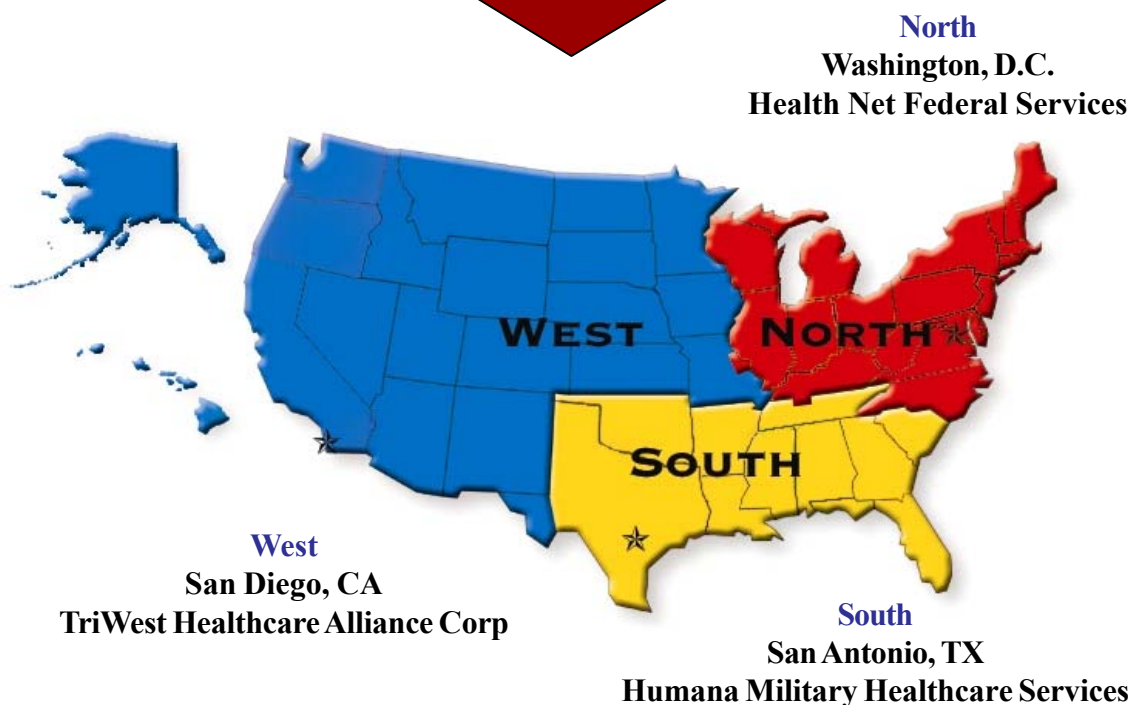
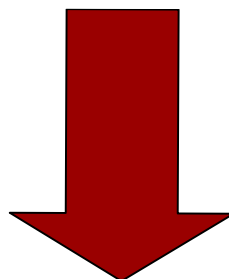
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1-800-242-6788

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1-800-242-6788

**REGION 11
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1-800-404-4506

CONUS New TRICARE Contracts for Health Care Services & Support 3 Regions & 3 Contractors

We are moving from 11 regions and 7 contractors, to 3 regions and 3 contractors resulting in better customer service, improved portability and access to quality health care.



More Retirees Returning To Tricare

by Master Sgt. Scott Elliott, Air Force Print News, 2/27/2004

WASHINGTON — Military retirees are returning to Tricare for their health care, and the service's senior executive thinks that is a good thing. But it comes at a price. Secretary of the Air Force Dr. James G. Roche met Feb. 26 with members of the House Committee on Armed Services to discuss the Air Force's portion of the 2005 National Defense Authorization Request. "This is a good-news story on one level — it's validation that we're caring for our retired servicemembers," Secretary Roche said. "It comes, however, with significant cost growth."

Retiree enrollment in Tricare has risen 8 percent in the past two years, because of higher premiums and co-pays in the civilian sector. Secretary Roche said the Department of Defense has reprogrammed about \$600 million this year to pay for that growth, and that the services are being forced to absorb increasing amounts. The secretary told committee members about an idea for a joint venture with Veterans Affairs to help cut costs and maximize usage of military facilities.

"We have unused capacity in our Air Force hospitals and clinics," he said. "We'd like to ... advertise to our retirees what's available at our Air Force medical facilities and see how many will come back — not to Tricare, which is cash, but come back to our existing facilities to work with our doctors." Secretary Roche urged the committee to keep the increased usage and costs in mind as they consider any proposed expansion of benefits. "I believe it's a good thing because it says we're keeping faith with people, and we gave them our word," he said.

TRICARE AND MAILING LIST INFO

1. DOD Worldwide TRICARE Information Center (Toll-Free) 1-888-DoD-LIFE (363-5433), 1-877-DoD MEDS (363-6337) or 1-888-DoD-CARE (363-2273). Operating Hours: Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. (ET) (excluding federal holidays).
2. Want to receive only TRICARE For Life Information? Send a message to TFL-ON@pasba2.amedd.army.mil (message subject and body may be left blank and you must send a message to HEALTH-OFF@pasba2.amedd.army.mil to get off this mailing list).
3. To get TRICARE answers, assistance via E-mail, send your message to mailto:TRICARE_Help@AMEDD.ARMY.MIL or <mailto:QUESTIONS@tma.osd.mil>

TRICARE Important Telephone Numbers

TRICARE Pacific

Alaska & Hawaii
800-242-6788

WESTPAC
888-777-8343

Latin America &
Canada
888-777-8343

Puerto Rico &
Virgin Islands
888-777-8343

Europe
888-777-8343

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TRICARE FOR LIFE
1-888-363-5433

PHARMACY
1-877-363-6337

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The TRICARE Dental Program (Updated: March 16, 2004)

The TRICARE Dental Program (TDP) was implemented on Feb. 1, 2001. The TDP is a voluntary dental insurance program that is available to eligible Active Duty family members, Selected Reserve and Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) members, and their eligible family members. The TRICARE Retiree Dental Program is a separate program.*

Dental Coverage:

- The TDP covers a wide range of diagnostic, preventive and restorative services—dental X-rays, examinations, cleanings, fluoride applications, sealants, fillings, root canals, crowns, etc.
- Benefit package includes general anesthesia coverage when provided in connection with a covered benefit. Dentists or other professional providers must be licensed and approved to provide anesthesia in the state where the service is rendered.
- Maximum annual benefit coverage is \$1,200 for all routine dental care. The maximum lifetime orthodontic benefit coverage is \$1,500.
- Enlisted members in pay grades E-1 to E-4 have reduced cost-shares for certain procedures.

Eligibility: Family members of all active-duty uniformed services members, Selected Reserve (SELRES) and Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) members and/or their families may enroll in the TRICARE Dental Program. Sponsors must have at least 12 months remaining of their service commitments at the time they or their families enroll. The 12-month enrollment commitment is waived for families of Reservists called to active duty for certain contingency operations if they apply for TDP within 30 days of entry on active duty.

Eligibility is determined based on the service member's military personnel information residing in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS). The uniformed services personnel office reports the information to DEERS.

Active duty personnel are not eligible for the TRICARE Dental Program. They receive dental care from military dental treatment facilities. Reservists who are ordered to active duty for a period of more than 30 consecutive days have the same benefits as active-duty service members.

* Additional information pertaining to reservists and their families can be found in the Medical and Dental Care for Reserve Component Members and their Families Fact Sheet

Former spouses, parents, parents-in-law, disabled veterans, foreign military personnel, and uniformed services retirees and their families are not eligible for the TRICARE Dental Program.

Enrollment: Enrollment in the TDP is handled by United Concordia Companies, Inc. (UCCI), the TDP contract administrator. Enrollment/Change applications are available by calling UCCI at 1-888-622-2256. Online enrollment is available at www.ucci.com. The enrollment application must be received by UCCI not later than the 20th day of the month for coverage to begin on the first day of the next month. UCCI is required to complete the enrollment process online real-time to the DEERS database. If UCCI receives the application after the 20th day of the month, coverage may not begin for two months. Incorrect eligibility information being provided to DEERS will cause applications to be denied. Enrollment options are available at www.ucci.com. Once enrolled, members **must** stay in the TRICARE Dental Program for at least 12 months (with certain exceptions, such as loss of DEERS eligibility because of divorce, marriage of a child, etc.). After 12 months, enrollment continues on a month-to-month basis. The sponsor must contact UCCI to disenroll from the TDP. The first month's premium is due upon enrollment. The premium amount is shown on the enrollment form. After the first month, monthly premiums may be paid by payroll allotment, or, in some cases, may be billed directly to the member by UCCI.

Costs to the Beneficiary:

Beneficiary Category	Costs
	Feb 1, 2004 - Jan 31, 2005
Active duty family members and family members of Selected Reserve and Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) (Special Mobilization Category) sponsors on Active Duty orders for greater than 30 days	Single enrollment, \$9.07 Family enrollment, \$22.66
Selected Reserve or Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) (Special Mobilization Category) sponsor	Single enrollment, \$9.07
Family members of Selected Reserve or IRR (Special Mobilization Category) sponsors not on orders for greater than 30 days	Single enrollment, \$22.68 Family enrollment, \$56.66
IRR (other than Special Mobilization Category) sponsors and their family members	

For more information about the TDP, beneficiaries may access the benefit handbook online at www.ucci.com or by calling toll-free 1-800-866-8499, 24 hours a day. Members residing outside the continental U.S. (OCONUS) should call 1-888-418-0466 (toll-free). This number is available in the following countries: Australia, Bahrain, Belgium, Bolivia, Columbia, Egypt, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Panama, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey and the United Kingdom. At all other locations, members should call 1-717-975-5017. Representatives are available to assist members in English, German and Italian 24 hours a day, Monday through Friday.

TRICARE Important Telephone Numbers

TRICARE Pacific

Alaska & Hawaii
800-242-6788

WESTPAC
888-777-8343

Latin America &
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Puerto Rico &
Virgin Islands
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Europe
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DoD Temporarily Extends TRICARE Eligibility Following Active Duty to 180 Days

TRICARE News Release, March 17, 2004, No. 04-07

Under the National Defense Authorization Act and the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2004, TRICARE eligibility for some active duty and Reserve Component members separating from active duty service is temporarily extended under the Department of Defense Transitional Assistance Management Program (TAMP) from 60 or 120 days to 180 days. The enhanced TRICARE provision, which began Nov. 6, 2003, and ends Dec. 31, 2004, is the first of three temporary programs the TRICARE program is implementing this spring under its "Temporary Reserve Health Benefit Program," to enhance access to care for active and Reserve Component sponsors separating from active military service and their family members. The only change to TAMP is the temporary extension for the eligibility period.

"We are pleased to implement these new benefits for separating service members and their families in order to assist the transition to civilian life," said Dr. William Winkenwerder Jr., assistant secretary of defense for health affairs. "TRICARE and contractor staff are working to make this temporary benefit work as smoothly as possible," he said. Eligible sponsors and family members must be enrolled in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS). Former active duty sponsors and family members eligible for the transitional program may enroll in TRICARE Prime in locations where TRICARE Prime is available, or they may use the TRICARE Extra or TRICARE Standard benefits. Under TAMP, active duty sponsors and family members are not eligible for TRICARE Prime Remote.

Former active duty and Reserve Component members who are eligible for transitional benefits may receive dental care at military dental treatment facilities on a space-available basis only. Family members are not eligible for dental care at these facilities. **Civilian dental care is not a covered benefit for sponsors or family members under the transitional program.** Certain members of the Reserve Component and their family members may, however, receive dental care by enrolling in the TRICARE Dental Program (TDP). To determine eligibility and get additional information, contact the TDP administrator, United Concordia Companies, Inc. at (800) 866-8499 or at <http://www.ucci.com>. All claims submitted to TRICARE for sponsors and family members eligible for transitional benefits are processed by the TRICARE claims processor at the TRICARE Standard or TRICARE Extra active duty family member rate. To apply for TRICARE reimbursement, sponsors or family members must submit a TRICARE claim form, a copy of the itemized bill, and an explanation of benefits and receipts (if available) to their regional managed care support contractor for processing.

The sponsor's Service branch determines whether the sponsor and family members are eligible for transitional benefits. Active duty and Reserve Component sponsors who are separating from active duty and need to verify eligibility for transitional TRICARE benefits for themselves and family members are encouraged to contact their nearest Service personnel office for assistance. DEERS eligibility may be verified by contacting the Defense Manpower Data Center Support Office toll free at (800) 538-9552.

On Jan. 1, 2005, TRICARE eligibility under the transitional program for active and Reserve Component sponsors who separate from active duty and have fewer than six years of total active federal service and their family members **returns to 60 days upon the sponsor's separation.**

TRICARE eligibility for active and Reserve Component sponsors who separate from active duty and have **six years or more of total active federal service and their family members returns to 120 days**-upon separation of the sponsor.

Sponsors and family members who need help understanding their TRICARE benefits or processing TRICARE claims, may contact their regional TRICARE beneficiary counseling and assistance coordinator for assistance. A list of BCAC names and telephone numbers for assistance is available at <http://www.tricare.osd.mil/bcacdirectory.cfm>. Additional information on TRICARE and the Temporary Reserve Health Benefit Program is available on the TRICARE Web site at <http://www.tricare.osd.mil/> and the Reserve Component Web site at <http://www.defenselink.mil/ra>. A list of frequently asked questions is available at <http://www.tricare.osd.mil/faqs/> by typing in keywords TAMP or Reserve.SOURCE: TRICARE web site at <http://www.tricare.osd.mil>

TRICARE AND MAILING LIST INFO:

1. DOD Worldwide TRICARE Information Center (Toll-Free) 1-888-DoD-LIFE (363-5433), 1-877-DoD MEDS (363-6337) or 1-888-DoD-CARE (363-2273). Operating Hours: Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. (ET) (excluding federal holidays).

2. To get TRICARE answers, assistance via E-mail, send your message to mail to: TRICARE_Help@AMEDD.ARMY.MIL or <mailto:QUESTIONS@tma.osd.mil>

3. To be automatically added to this mailing list, send a message to: Health-ON@PASBA2.AMEDD.ARMY.MIL (subject/body may be left blank).

The New TRICARE South Scheduled to Begin in Summer/Fall, 2004.

[Humana Military Healthcare Services](#) (HMHS) was awarded the Department of Defense contract to administer the TRICARE program in the South Region. Healthcare delivery under the South Region contract is scheduled to begin in Summer/Fall, 2004.

Over the next several months, HMHS will be working diligently to create a seamless transition for our beneficiaries and a robust network of TRICARE providers. Provider contracting efforts for TRICARE South are already underway. HMHS recently mailed contract agreements and credentialing applications to current TRICARE network primary care managers and specialists in [Region 6](#). Region 6 currently consists of the following area: Arkansas; Oklahoma; Texas, except for the extreme Western area; major part of Louisiana

Check back often for the latest information about the TRICARE South Region contract, along with the initiatives taking place to ensure a smooth transition.

www.humana-military.com

TRICARE Important Telephone Numbers

TRICARE Pacific

Alaska & Hawaii
800-242-6788

WESTPAC
888-777-8343

Latin America &
Canada
888-777-8343

Puerto Rico &
Virgin Islands
888-777-8343

Europe
888-777-8343

Family Readiness Air Guard Expanded Executive Council

Fisk Outwater - Chairman
Kathleen Flaherty
Terry Henderson
Janice Richardson
Deborah Dunlap - Recognition Committee
Martha Pasour - Youth Committee

Family Readiness office telephone numbers

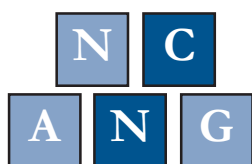
- " 704-398- 4949
- " Cell Phone: 980-721-4019
- DSN: 231-4239

The fastest way to get in touch with FR is now through the cell phone or pager, someone will answer or get back in touch with you as quickly as possible

Emergency contact calls:

- " Pager: 1-800-250-4181

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One Family at a Time*



Family Readiness
5225 Morris Field Drive
Charlotte, NC 28208

Phone: 1-800-354-6943 Ext 4949
Cell Phone: 980-721-4019

WE'RE ON THE WEB!
www.ncchar.ang.af.mil

Family Readiness

Charter

Develop a program to provide information, on-going education, and assistance to families, members, and leadership aimed at preparing military members and their families for National Guard Military Life

Mission

Educate, Support, Assist, Communicate, Collaborate, and Sustain